# Introduction

#### If you’re hoping to steal some cards or something you’re probably not going to get much from this argument. A lot of the argument was predicated on the poetry. If it wasn’t based on the poetry is was formulated from extrapolations of prior-knowledge that was then applied to the evidence I read. I didn’t disclose this at the “Tournament of Champions” because I wasn’t comfortable putting my performance and personal poetry “out there” for people to prep out. It seems to me that takes away from the experience of the poetry and the Tragedy that the entire argument is about. The argument instead becomes something to “prep out” without actually noticing or taking it in, and in my mind that takes away from the experience that it was meant to be. I feel more comfortable disclosing it here, knowing that Circuit Debater isn’t a competitive environment in the sense of people prepping out the argument to debate, but instead is a learning tool that debaters study, imitate, use as a stasis point, and learn from. This will then, I hope, preserve the experience that I wanted this argument to be. When I first started debating I struggled to find many kritikal arguments that related to “performance”, so hopefully a young debater will stumble across this and find something beautiful in themselves to utilize in exploration and creation. May your will and expression elevate you to new heights, and may your strength be forged on the anvil of your own creation.

#### Grant B.

# Tragic Art

#### *“Gradually it has become clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been - namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir; also that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constituted the real germ of life from which the whole plant had grown.”*

#### *Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil*

## Chapter One

### Act 1 is Disability

#### My perspective renders this discussion inaccessible

#### Living wages are impossible

#### Employers do not exist

#### My father is made up of endless pain, surgery, and hospital stays

#### An eternal work of art

#### A tattoo reading “pain will not defeat me” graces his skin

#### My mother is at the intersection of a will stronger than any I’ve ever seen to care for our family

#### And the inability due to mental illness that seeks to drag her into a prison within her own mind

#### My OCD makes even writing this, take hours, of anxiety, angst, and panic

#### For my parents – employers envision them as liability, diseased, problematic, pitiful

#### Why would I attempt to step into this vision of this oppressor?

#### To attempt to play as if that relationship was possible?

#### To embody this resolution

#### Would be self-destruction

#### A severing of perspective

#### Death

#### Because in relation to wages and employers

#### My family and I can never be living

### Act 2 is Crip Dionysus

#### Because…

#### My life is the Apollonian-Dionysian battle par excellence

#### Constituted and shaped by my OCD

#### Apollonian obsession with structure and perfection

#### Dionysian embrace of chaos and joyous suffering

#### Recognizing the beautiful nullity and chaos of this plane of existence

#### This polar opposite recognitions create an irresolvable consciousness

#### Constant obsession craving a utopian perception

#### Constant chaotic nullity breaking this possibility

#### This breeds madness and freedom

#### Trapped in a cage, ripping each other to pieces

#### To accept Apollo would slaughter Dionysus

#### To accept Dionysus would decimate Apollo

#### Yet to let them clash

#### Is the finality in which I am faced

#### Ironically creating endless battle and possibility

#### Forged within the sparks of their weaponry

#### Producing my twisted tragedy

#### Oh…to be alive!

#### Some shout and sing

#### Dancing merrily in circles of cheer!

#### The greatest lie to behold

#### Oh…to be alive!

#### Such a sorrowful song

#### To say such phrase

#### It stings the lungs to take in the breath to speak it!

#### It burns the eyes to behold lips shape the words!

#### It sunders the brain to formulate such a thought!

#### Yet these observations breeds such trickery!

#### Many would hear such words

#### And respond by crumbling

#### Lying cold and sorrowful

#### Upon the ground of existence, succumbing to the void of despair!

#### Yet! I do not!

#### I engulf myself in creation and scream!

#### A scream of pure sorrow, of despair, of death, of horror

#### …of life

#### This is what it means to live

#### To shout to the night sky unblinking as it too stares uncaring

#### To demand and will creation despite the meaninglessness of it all

#### Not for the nullity

#### But in spite of its suffocating inevitability

#### To shape sorrow, despair, darkness, and the heavy burden of it all

#### Into a beautiful plane of unending possibility

#### The ultimate hand of God is yours to play

#### There is no light, no meaning, nothing –

#### Outside of your hands and will

#### Outside of your eyes

#### The world is darkness

#### What it means to live…?

#### To bestow sight upon the abyss.

### Act 3 is Multiplicity

#### Yet – there is more to these Apollonian Constructions

#### Nietzsche in the dichotomy creates a necessitation for a structure of perspective

#### My perspective is a structure I cannot escape

#### My chaos – the cripple that disrupts the Nietzschean structure continuously

#### Is always one of a particular sort –

#### White, male, OCD, disability, wealth-inequality - thousands of molecular constructions –

#### Yet the chaos of millions of more are ones in which I will never occupy –

#### Female, Black, Latino, Queer, Trans - millions of identities

#### The perspectival affirmation of this multiplicity of chaos is a chaotic encounter of my identity in relationship to others –

#### I affirm not only my chaos, but the chaos that is our relations and identities.

#### Constantly in contestation – creating tantalizing possibilities and new planes to explore and interrogate

## Chapter Two

#### In the beginning – there was perfection

#### The cosmos and chains of stardust

#### They had no end –

#### Spiraling

#### Wicked

#### Beautiful –

#### Perfection.

#### Then – the cosmos exhaled

#### And at once it was shattered

#### Telos or End - was born out of the gasp of the universe

#### With an end now created – perfection became truth

#### Imperfection –

#### The stasis of the cosmos –

#### The parent of our consciousness –

#### Chaos - -

#### Was deemed deficient.

#### We are Telos –

#### We are the creators of goal, ending, purpose -

#### Humankind we are -

#### Created and birthed by Chaos -

#### Yet we do not know our Father nor Mother

#### Unknowing opposition to our creators

#### But –

#### We see glimpses of our nature

#### In times of pain –

#### In illness

#### The blood of Chaos runs through these veins –

#### Cold and beautiful

#### A dance with stardust

#### Infinitely creative –

#### Imagine the possibilities in the chaotic!

#### Chaos – the ultimate form of art

#### Born out of struggle.

#### Yet the question lingers –

#### Who is Telos?

#### What is humankind?

#### What now for those constantly in Chaos?

#### The disabled has no choice when it comes to blood –

#### The blood of the Crip is always chaotic –

#### Always in struggle –

#### In relation to oneself, society, Telos –

#### The Crip is always in opposition

#### To be Crip is to be Chaos

#### To be Crip is to create Art

#### Infinitely creative –

#### Imagine the possibilities in the chaotic!

#### Chaos – the ultimate form of art

#### Born out of struggle.

#### Thus the role of the ballot in this debate is to vote for who best performatively and methodologically engages in Tragic Art.

#### Thus now you hear the song –

#### The whisper

#### The lips speak!

#### The voice of tragedy!

#### Oh how beautiful it rings –

#### Does your ear tremble?

#### At such pain turned beautiful?

#### This is tragedy –

#### This is the Tragic Art.

#### Representations and resolutions that embody ableist and life-denying structures create a constant opposition with identities like myself. Thus – out of necessity - the poetry I speak is a form of Tragic Art that becomes a productive survival strategy for myself and people with similar relationships. Tragic Art is created out of merging Apollonian creation and Dionysian destruction. This view of life as beautifully tragic creates joyous affirmation of life that shapes beauty from despair, and sees the despair within life not only as-such, but also as a door opened to freeing possibility and creation. Friedrich Ulfers[[1]](#footnote-1) furthers on Tragic Art –

What is essential here is Nietzsche's association of the tragic and music with the Dionysian, and more precisely with Dionysian wisdom in its merger with the Apollonian art impulse. We recall here the insight of that wisdom gained through the "intoxication of suffering," that is, that the chiasmic suffering of nature constitutes the Will: "the primordial contradiction and primordial pain, along with the primordial pleasure of seeming" (KSA 1.44). As Nietzsche puts it, "The Dionysian, with its primordial joy experienced even in pain, is the common source of music and tragic myth" (BT 24. 14 1). What, then, is the "higher glorification" that is supposed to occur in tragedy and music? With regard to the tragic myth, which relates the suffering of the tragic hero, Nietzsche proposes the following: there is an ecstatic Dionysian insight into the Will as a chiasmic unity of suffering and pleasure. The suffering of the Will is simultaneous with the Will's joy or relief in manifesting itself as "appearance," i.e., as a phenomenal world that is simultaneously a coming-to-be and a passing-away, a world always being annihilated. 20 The "metaphysical comfort" offered by tragedy is an attunement to the "eternal life of that core of existence, the ever-ongoing going under [ Untergang] of phenomena" (KSA 1.59). What Nietzsche claims for "higher glorification" is that it is first through the tragic, with its conception of the "intoxication of suffering" and "Dionysian wisdom," that we can understand the j oy involved in the annihilation of the individual: For it is only in particular examples of such annihilation that we see dearly the eternal phenomenon of Dionysian art, which gives expression to the Will ... behind the principium individuationis, the eternal life beyond all phenomena, and despite all annihilation. The ... joy in the tragic is the translation of the instinctive, unconscious Dionysian wisdom into the language of images: the [tragic] hero ... is negated for our pleasure, because he is only phenomenon, and because the eternal life of the Will is not affected by his annihilation. (BT 16. 104) The tragic hero is not to be pitied; he is annihilated for our pleasure. We are to be thankful that he embodies the eternal phenomenalization of the Will's suffering and pleasure. In other words, Nietzsche upends the Aristotelian definition of tragedy, which relies on fear, pity and catharsis. 18 To the extent that catharsis does occur here, it involves the joy that only phenomena are destroyed. At its core, life-as the coming to be and passing away of phenomena, as neither more nor less than the ambivalently productive pathos of nature or Will-goes on forever.”

#### And, the affirmative’s performance is the argument – the role of the judge is to partake in tragedy. The Dionysian chorus that is my poetry allows those outside of my own experience to identify themselves within my tragedy and no longer be spectators observing and affirming my tragedy but instead feel a sense of unity and place themselves within the very tragedy itself.

Roy Jackson, 2007

“Nietzsche and Islam” pg 52

Nietzsche developed this dualism of art and nature under the principles of Apollo and Dionysus. These two Greek gods are presented as a metaphor for two fundamental principles. Nietzsche compares the Apollonian with dreams. In a dream you express fantasies but these are a way of forgetting the world rather than confronting the realities of the world. Apollonian art is exemplified by painting and sculpture. In the same way in which we conjure up images in dreams, so we do this in painting. But these paintings are only representations of the world; they are fantasies that allow us to turn our backs, at least for a while, from the world we live in. Nietzsche compares Dionysian art with intoxication. Nietzsche did not necessarily mean alcoholic intoxication, but rather the kind of ecstasy that can also be caused by other means than alcohol, for example through sexual intercourse, dancing or religious activities. Like the Apollonian, the Dionysian is a mechanism for fleeing from reality, but intoxication is not the same as fantasy. Dream fantasies are an individual and private experience when you turn away from the world. Dionysian intoxication, however, is not about forgetting the world, but forgetting your self and experiences more of a mystical communal union. Dionysian art, then, is more akin to music and poetry. Nietzsche accepted that the distinction between painting and music was not always so clear. It is quite possible, for example, to have Dionysian painting and Nietzsche was aware that music had Apollo as its patron god. The more important distinction is how one responds to the work of art, rather than the work of art itself. Nietzsche stresses that Apollo and Dionysus are not opposites, but work side by side. They complement each other, and, therefore, the perfect art is one that embodies both the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Nietzsche saw this art as existing in Greek tragedy. Nietzsche’s most important contribution in The Birth of Tragedy is the attack on the view—prevalent amongst the middle classes of the time—that ancient Greece was so idyllic. Rather, Nietzsche argued, for the Greeks life was brutal, short and full of suffering. How did the Greeks cope with these facts of life? Greek art, through the fusion of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, was such a mechanism for making life tolerable. The Apollonian element was needed to create the illusion, the fantasy, which distracted them from the horrors of everyday life. If, Nietzsche argued, the Greeks were supposed to be as happy and sunny as pictured, then there would be no need for Apollonian art, yet there is plenty of evidence of Greek tragedy to show that the Greeks suffered immensely. In Greek tragedy we are presented with the images of gods and men, of heroes and monsters, as a way of transforming their fears for such things, in the same way dreams are projections of our own fears and doubts. **The Dionysian element is the tragic chorus present in the tragedy.** The chorus would narrate, through song, the story. The chorus acted as an artistic substitute for the Dionysian rites by allowing the audience to identify themselves with these singing, dancing characters and therefore participating within the tragedy themselves and not be mere spectators. This was therapeutic, allowing the audience to feel a sense of unity with their fellows, with the chorus, and with the drama of the tragedy, as well as feeling themselves to be god-like.

1. Friedrich Ulfers, 2013

   “The Dionysian Vision of the World” First Edition published by Univocal, translated by Ira. J. Allen. “Introduction” pages 19-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)